

# THE HILL WEST HERALD

  
HILL WEST  
*Primary*  
FOUR OAKS



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## Message from the Head Teacher

By Dr Beth Clarke

This was probably the most difficult Head Teacher message I have ever had to write. It was difficult to get started too as I wanted the message to be up-lifting but everything I thought of sharing with you about our work before we school closed on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March seemed so irrelevant; It seemed to trivialize the situation we are all finding ourselves in, isolating at home or social distancing at work. I thought it might be useful therefore, if I just articulated my thoughts at present, in the hope that they may at least help one or two of you at home.

- It is perfectly normal and acceptable to have higher levels of anxiety at this time. If this becomes overwhelming, reach out for support. Whether over the phone, via messages or online, talking to others can help. NHS Every Mind Matters has advice on line for managing Coronavirus anxiety.
- Social or physical distancing is more important now than ever before. I do not think I had realised beforehand how difficult it was going to be to refrain from giving colleagues and friends a hug, when in work or when passing them on the street. Staying a safe distance away however is imperative, even though it feels very strange.
- Do not worry too much about home learning. The one thing I have learnt since being an adoptive mum is that the most precious gift you can give your child is your time, love and energy. We can catch up the learning when the children get back to school, it will be our job to do so. Focus, if you can, on the relationships (attune, validate, contain and regulate). Focus on doing things together that make you happy, that make you laugh. See this time as a 'gift' and an 'opportunity' to make positive connections. This is our chance to myelinate connections in the brain that enhance kindness, thoughtfulness, courage, empathy, persistence and resilience.
- Working from home while looking after and investing in your children can be hard. Try to set up a routine that everyone in your household understands. This is 'work time' and this is 'fun time'. Also, remember your working day can potentially be a bit shorter as you tend to achieve more at home than you would likely have achieved in situ at work.
- The welfare and safety of our children continues to be our main priority during these very challenging times. Each day we have a designated safeguarding lead in school who can offer support and advice should you need it. This will also be the case throughout the Easter holiday including the bank holidays. Please feel free to call us as necessary.
- Every single one of us should be enormously proud of the role we have played in the UK's response to the national crisis we find ourselves facing.
- There is light at the end of the rainbow. This time will pass and we will be stronger for it. Please keep safe, wishing you and your extended families the very best of health.

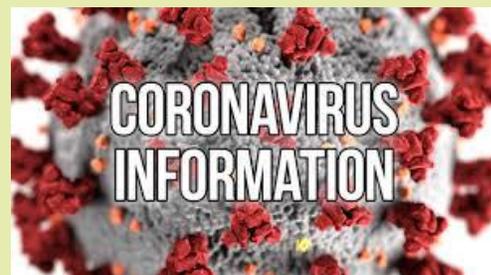
Everyone wants,  
**happiness.**

No one wants,  
**pain.**

But you cant have a  
**rainbow,**  
without a little  
**rain.**

## Arthur Terry Learning Partnership News; Richard Gill (ATLP CEO) issues a letter to parents

By Beth Clarke



You will remember that earlier this month Richard Gill (CEO of the ATLP) wrote to all parents in relation to the Coronavirus pandemic. Below is a summary of what he said...

*"I am taking the unusual action of writing to all parents and careers of children who attend an ATLP school. This allows the headteacher to concentrate on making specific arrangements in their own schools following the announcement that schools are to close".*

Mr Gill wanted to reassure parents that all ATLP schools were working exceptionally hard to support pupils and their families as a whole, recognising that our schools are at the heart of our communities. Mr Gill also acknowledged that many of our pupils had to accept the harsh realisation that their tests or exams were not going to take place, often after many months or indeed years of hard work in the lead-up. We genuinely feel for these pupils.

As per the government guidance Hill West like other ATLP schools, continue to provide education on-site for children of parents categorised as 'key-workers'. We are also providing an education for any child who has a vulnerability, because they have identified special educational needs or because they have now or have had in the past, an allocated social worker assigned to the family. Early indications led us to believe that we would be welcoming approximately 50 pupils to Hill West each day during the first two weeks of school closure but this decreased dramatically following the Governments re-issued advice, which encouraged us all to stay at home to save lives. However, we all acknowledge the very important role we play in enabling our key workers to attend their front line employment. We also recognize that for some children, the stability of school significantly enhances their well-being.



This is certainly a very anxious time for all. The nation is experiencing a situation we have not experienced before meaning there have been huge changes for both parents and children. It is perfectly normal to feel anxious. Our children will be feeling anxious too. What might anxiety look like in children?

- **Physical signs** – children may complain of headaches or stomach aches, appear restless, fidgety and distracted, or find their muscles tense up.
- **Emotional signs** – look out for children appearing particularly sensitive or crying a lot, becoming grumpy or angry without any obvious reason, or withdrawing and becoming less responsive.
- **Behavioural signs** – children sometimes ask a lot of questions because they are curious or excited, but it can also be a sign of anxiety; be aware of children appearing pre-occupied, having 'meltdowns' or exhibiting self-soothing behaviours.

In response we should all remain calm and give them information in a matter of fact way. Be honest about what is happening but reassure them by explaining what the Government and Health Service are doing to protect us all. Children need to see that the adults in their life are calm and in control of the situation. This can be tricky, as we too try to manage our own anxieties, which may be growing, as time passes. Thinking of you all.

# National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordination

By Mrs Hannah Cook

Since returning from Maternity Leave this time last year, my role in school has changed quite significantly. Taking on the new role of 'Inclusion Lead', I was initially a little apprehensive – particularly in terms of the 'Special Educational Needs Coordinator' aspect – there seemed to be so many acronyms, so many processes, not to mention a lot of paperwork! However, I am now almost a year into this new adventure, and I have learnt an awful lot along the way. Much of this learning has been through experience, but I have also been studying for the National Award in Special Educational Needs Coordination (NASENCo), which a newly appointed SENDCO must achieve by the time they have been in post for three years.

The SENCO Award is a yearlong programme, with ten face-to-face study days at the University of Birmingham and three assignments. So far, I have found these days invaluable – not only due to the fact they have given me a wealth of knowledge about many aspects of the role, but also because they have allowed me some valuable reflection time. This, alongside my experience 'on the job' back in school has taught me a huge amount about the role of the SENCO.

## So, what have I learnt so far?

### Relationships, relationships, relationships...

As a SENCO, I have found that developing positive relationships is key. Sometimes as teachers, we can wrongly assume that we are 'experts' on the children in our classrooms. Whilst we do pride ourselves at Hill West on developing strong and genuine relationships with our pupils, we also must remember that parents know their children better than we ever will so communicating with them effectively is vital in order to get the full picture of a child. In the last two terms, I have already had the privilege of working with many wonderful families, as well as liaising with teachers and a wide range of external agencies. I am trying hard to continue to build effective relationships with parents, involving them in steps I am taking and explaining why, and supporting or liaising with them, depending on what they and their children say they need.

### What is the 'SEND Code of Practice'?

The SEND Code of Practice is statutory guidance for organisations that work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. It sets out duties, policies and procedures which must be carried out.

### There's A LOT to remember!

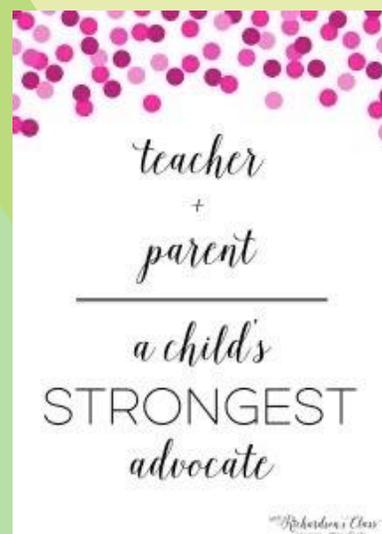
...but I'm getting there! The teaching profession is relatively well known for its acronyms, but in the realms of Special Educational Needs there are even more of them! ASD, SLCN, EHCP...you could pretty much put any group of letters together and they will appear somewhere in the SEND Code of Practice! I have found that the best way to understand a process or procedure is to through experience, so I've had to accept I can't be an expert on everything yet. Our fantastic external agencies have been a great support to me – including Mark Hill from the CAT team (another acronym – Community Autism Team), Anita Soni, our Educational Psychologist, and Jo Dowson, from Pupil and School Support.

### Our staff and children are just brilliant

OK, this one is a bit of a copout, as I knew this anyway! But I do feel extremely privileged to work with practitioners who truly have our children at the heart of everything they do. They go out of their way to try to make sure each child has exactly what they need and care deeply for their pupils, always willing to try new things. Above all, our children, some of whom have significant challenges, are resilient, positive, diverse, hard-working and have a real belief in themselves which we could all learn from. They really do make me feel like I've landed the best job in the whole world...

### What is a SENDCO?

The acronym 'SENDCO' stands for *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator*. This is a mandatory strategic role within a school. The SENDCO is the individual with overall responsibility for ensuring the coordination of provision for all learners with SEN within the school is undertaken.



EVERY  
CHILD IS A  
*different* KIND OF flower,  
AND ALL TOGETHER,  
MAKE THIS WORLD  
A Beautiful GARDEN.



## Easter Activities that you can do inside

By Miss Sophie Roberts and Miss Devon Ward



With the beautiful weather we have been having we can really start to see that Spring is finally here! With Spring, comes Easter and we all know how much the children love Easter! Normally school would be full of lots of Easter crafts and activities and the excitement would be building. Here are a few Easter activities that you could do at home ...



Easter Egg hunts are always lots of fun and a great way to promote learning! You could draw your own Easter egg shape or use plastic Easter eggs to hide around the house. Inside/On the Easter eggs could be clues, tricky words, phonemes, numbers or addition problems ... whichever best suits the need of your child!



There are so many wonderful craft ideas out there that we can do at home with resources we might have lying around. Here are some that you could try at home...



Create Easter Bunnies using toilet rolls!

Use a fork to make a Chick painting!



Create colourful flowers using egg boxes!

Use potatoes to stamp Easter Egg patterns!



A tradition at Hill West is the great Easter Egg rolling competition. Why don't you try decorating an egg at home and as a family having your own mini Easter egg rolling competition?



### Make some delicious Easter Egg Nest Cakes!

#### Ingredients

- Milk chocolate
- Shredded Wheat
- Mini Eggs



1. Melt the chocolate in a small bowl placed over a pan of hot water. Pour the chocolate over the shredded wheat and stir well.

2. Spoon the mixture into cupcake cases and press the back of a teaspoon in the centre to create a nest shape. Place 3 mini eggs on top of each nest. Chill the nests in the fridge.

## KS2 Drumming Masterclass

By Mr Steve George

Jeff Rich – famed drummer with ‘Status Quo’ visited Hill West to deliver a musical workshop with the students. The session saw over 100 students playing percussion instruments along with Jeff and learning about the history, development and versatility of the drums.

After touring the world and playing to hundreds of thousands of people, Jeff was able to pass on advice to the students about setting a goal, working hard, and achieving it.

He recalled how he would practice two hours every night after school, starting with just a snare drum. As his passion for drums grew, he told them, so did his drum kit.

Dr Beth Clarke – Head Teacher - said: “We were delighted to host Jeff, a master of his craft, at Hill West.

You could see the students were all invested in the workshop and attentive to what Jeff was telling them.

We believe in putting the children first, and giving them opportunities like this exemplifies this approach. Jeff’s workshop enabled students to take part, learn new skills, and learn about the importance of hard work to achieve your goal.

We thank Jeff for his time and coming to deliver a fun workshop for some of our students at Hill West, and we hope to welcome him back in the future.”

The masterclass lasted for just over an hour and a half, with students using different kinds of drums – ranging from African drums to old European military drums in the first half.

Jeff demonstrated different rhythms and rudiments on each drum, and then invited the pupils to have a go. They were also invited to play on Jeff’s state of the art drum kit.

Year 6 student Beatrix and Year 3 student Jiana took the opportunity improvise a solo in front of the rest of the group.

Jeff said: “I was most impressed with the students; the way they listened, joined in when asked and they were really enthusiastic as well!

“I look forward to returning for another workshop in the near future.”



## New Class Teacher Appointments

By Mrs Hannah Cook

Following a hugely rigorous and successful day of interviews on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, we are delighted to introduce you to four new class teachers who will be joining the Hill West team in September. The field of applicants was extremely strong, which made our job very difficult but left us spoilt for choice! As a result, we have appointed four impressive class teachers, each of whom will be bringing their wealth of experience and expertise. Let's meet them...



**Mr Joel Holmes**

Hello I'm Mr Holmes; I thought I ought to introduce myself as I'll be a new face around school in September. I'm a young and active teacher and have been working in Nottingham for the last two years.

I enjoy being active and playing football and dodgeball (I used to be the captain of my University Dodgeball team). My hobbies include watching action movies, cooking delicious meals and travelling the world!

I have always loved teaching and my favourite kinds of lessons to teach are those which are full of activity and adventure; I can't wait to explore the grounds at Hill West! I look forward to meeting you all in September!

Hello! My name is Miss Lynch and I am so excited about starting at Hill West in September and becoming a part of your community! I'm truly passionate about teaching and encouraging children to believe in themselves and empowering them to work hard and accomplish their goals. I believe that you can achieve anything you put your mind to! I enjoy teaching all subjects but if I had to pick a favourite I would choose English as I love the creativity, power of writing and reading. Some of my favourite texts I have used for writing are 'The Giants Necklace' by Michael Morpurgo and 'Skellig' by David Almond.

In my spare time I love to read and I can get lost in a book for hours. My favourite book I have read most recently is 'The Middler' by Kirsty Applebaum. I live with my partner and we have a son who is 19. During weekends and holidays as a family we love to take long walks and then have a picnic. Stranger Things, Star Wars and Marvel are just some of my favourite films and series that I enjoy watching in my spare time; I cannot wait for series four of Stranger Things to air. I look forward to meeting you all – take care and see you soon!



**Miss Kerry Lynch**



**Miss Collette Hallworth**

Hello, I'm Miss Hallworth. Having been born and raised in South Wales, I decided to take the leap and move to the West Midlands in the summer of 2019 where I bought my first house. This was an extremely scary time for me as it meant that I was moving away from my family, but is a decision that I have not regretted since.

From an early age I have always had a passion for teaching and coaching and this led me to complete my degree in Sports Coaching (BSc hons). Shortly after I completed my PGCE at Bath Spa University. Since then I have been completing day-to-day supply duties including multiple long-term placements which made it much easier to complete my induction year. I am now in my second year of teaching and am enjoying having my own class and being part of the Hill West community. My time spent at Hill West so far has made me realise how ready I am and I'm over the moon to be welcomed as a full time, permanent member of staff in the new academic year.

Greetings Hill West Primary! My name is Ryan Horne and I am very excited to be joining your school in September. I originally come from Canada and have been travelling all over the world for the past ten years or so. I have been lucky to teach in South Korea for 3 years before coming to settle in the UK. I have worked at a primary school in Oxfordshire for the last 4 years but am very excited to be starting a new adventure at a new school.

I love communicating with others and that is one of the prime reasons I began teaching here in England. I enjoy sharing knowledge with those I teach and, in turn, learning a lot from them too! I am a huge fan of music so you may hear a guitar coming from my classroom from time to time. I enjoy sharing music with others and I hope to have a chance to do that with you all! I also enjoy lots of science fiction films and stories. So don't be surprised to see anything 'Star Wars' related in my classroom! I am thrilled and excited to meet you all and I can't wait begin our school year in September!



**Mr Ryan Horne**

**WELCOME!**

# Reading

By Mrs Jaimey Thomas

Throughout the year, many schools in our partnership have attended an ongoing reading course with the fantastic Literacy Expert, Tony Whatmuff. This rigorous training has given us a chance to celebrate the outstanding reading teaching and learning that is already cemented within our practice at Hill West, as well as giving us an opportunity to continue to develop our ever-improving curriculum.

To allow us to reflect even further on reading across school, we recently held a review which was led by other school leaders within our partnership. Our visitors were overwhelmed with the teaching and learning of reading throughout Hill West and the glowing report that followed really does celebrate the reading opportunities available to every child in our school.

During the review we found that children across school have an extremely positive attitude towards reading which is a testament to the hard work of all of the staff across the school. We have a great emphasis on reading for pleasure, with all classes listening to a class novel at the end of the day as well as children being given time each day to read and visit our well stocked school library once a week. Our approach of 'reading into writing' received great praise with 'clear sequences of learning with a seamless transition between reading and writing'. Our use of reading eggs was also complimented, with it being used alongside our rich reading curriculum to provide personalised next steps tailored to every child's needs.

## Our Next Steps

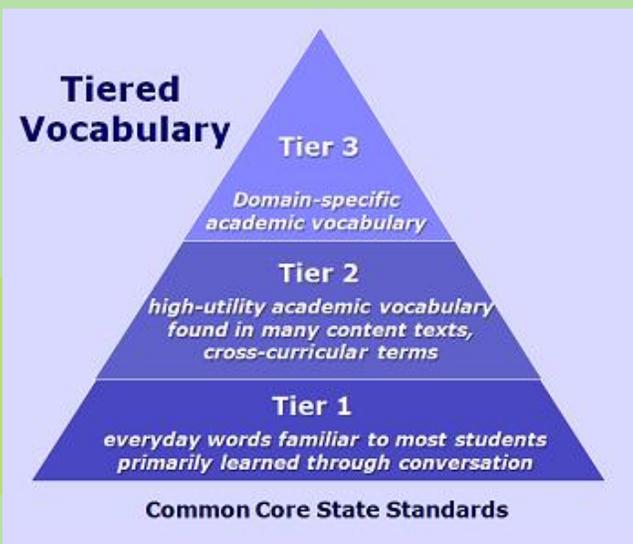
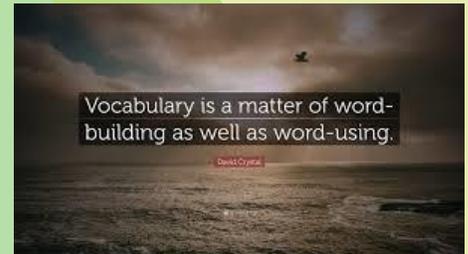
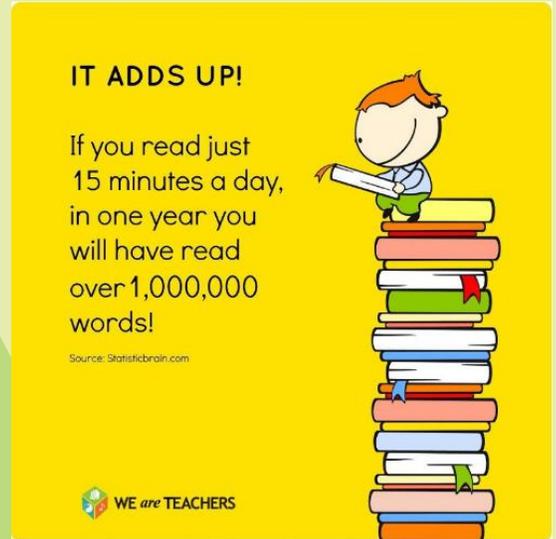
This year at Hill West we have introduced the use of the three tiers of vocabulary throughout school, with a focus on developing all children's Tier 2 vocabulary. These are words used in the written and oral language of mature language users (for example 'required' instead of 'have to', or 'maintain' instead of 'keep going').

Moving forward, we want vocabulary to be even more prominent within school as recent vocabulary training sessions that I have attended have shown how important that explicit vocabulary teaching is to develop reading skills.

Class teachers will pre-teach vocabulary at the start of each new unit of work to ensure that children are frequently exposed to a range of ambitious vocabulary and that they have a deep understanding of how to use these words, in the correct context. It is important too of course that we continue to use mature language in our everyday interactions with children - 'Put simply the word rich get richer, but the word poor get poorer' (Quigley 2018).

*'Students with limited vocabularies read less and thus learn fewer new words'*

*'Matthew effect' (Stanovich 1986)*



## Maths Challenge

By Mrs Kerry-Lynn Lampitt

Many of us grown-ups will have fond memories of 'The Crystal Maze'. A team of contestants took on a range of challenges set within a labyrinth of the same name in this popular British game show. This labyrinth consisted of four time zones, and contestants tried to win crystals (golf ball-sized Swarovski glass crystals) for each one they successfully completed. Reaching the centre of the Maze, "The Crystal Dome", the team would work together collecting a certain amount of gold tokens to win a prize, within the allotted time inside the Dome being determined by the number of crystals they obtained in the previous zones.



On 4<sup>th</sup> March, The Coleshill School recreated this famous game show, bringing all of the partnership schools together with lots of fantastic maths challenges, pulling on all different aspects of maths from completing calculations to problem solving. Our brilliant Year Six pupils were certainly up to the challenge, participating in a competitive situation to demonstrate their superior maths knowledge.



Each school team had to compete on 'The Crystal Maze' undertaking a series of challenges (referred to as mathematical challenge games). Teams began at a pre-determined zone, whereupon they competed a mathematical challenge, accruing as many crystals as they could before travelling to the large "Crystal Dome Final" at the center of the (stage) maze to meet their final challenge and open the treasure chest.

Upon entering a game's spot, the objective was to determine by either a clear written message or cryptic clue the mathematical answer within a given time frame. Year Six collected the most crystals but the tight time frame wasn't quite long enough for them to open the chest and they were unfortunately pipped to the post by Two Gates Primary School!

Nevertheless, all of our super Year Six mathematicians did Hill West very proud

indeed– not just through their amazing mathematical knowledge but also through their team-working skills. We had a great morning and it was brilliant to participate in this exciting challenge with lots of our Partnership schools.

## Pupil Contributions

By Mrs Hannah Cook

This half term, we decided to give our pupils the opportunity to contribute to the Herald as part of their home learning. Thank you so much to everyone who sent things in – you are obviously working really hard and we have loved seeing your contributions. If you didn't manage to get anything to us in time, we'd still love to see all your learning via Twitter!

### My 1<sup>st</sup> Week of Home School

By Anna Newport (Squirrels)

I have been learning about Africa, For Geography I have learnt about all of the different countries including Tanzania, Chad, Egypt, Sudan, Angola, Kenya, Libya, Nigeria, Zaire, Mali, Morocco and many more.

We also talked about the places that my parents had been including Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, Gambia, Tanzania, Zanzibar. My Dad has also been to Zambia because he actually lived there for 10 years, he went to school there as well.

For my work I made a fact file about a country in Africa and I chose to do Egypt. My brother William (he's in year 1) chose to learn about Zambia.



For history we learnt about Nelson Mandela and how he fought for all of the African people with black skin to be treated equally no matter what colour their skin is.

For art I made an elephant out of an empty toilet roll and covered it in silver card. next, I cut out 2 ears and a trunk and stuck them on. Then, I drew 2 eyes on. Finally, I attached some green and blue paper to elephant. My brother made a Lion.



We learnt to make a Moroccan meal called lamb tagine. It was delicious. We watched Tarzan, The Lion King and Madagascar.

In other subjects like maths we made cookies and rock cakes weighing all the ingredients. I also did lots of P.E with Joe Wickes and I am very lucky because my dance school is continuing my lessons on Facebook live and zoom.

## Sonic Creative Writing

By Seb Chilver (Rabbits)

This week I have been doing creative writing work with my mummy all about Sonic the Hedgehog and his friends. Here are some of my descriptions – hope you enjoy them!

**Sonic** - This speedy creature can run as fast as light on land. Tails is not his slave but is his loyal, kind, best friend. As blue as the ocean with eyes as bulging as two treasure boxes, he is a super cool dude! Amazingly, this furry creature can turn into a blast of a brilliant, blue wave.



**Tails** - Being Sonic's best friend forever, he has been on many adventures including rescuing people, fighting and saving the day! Why did they call him Tails? Easy...because he has more than one tail! With his super power tails, he can glide through the skies as fast as lightning and like a rocket.

**Knuckles** - This burning red echidna can break through solid, stone walls. He is also known as the Guardian of the Emerald. On his belly he has a white dash that looks like a blizzard. Obviously, he's called 'Knuckles' because he's always breaking down walls with his knuckles!!

**Shadow** - This villain created by Dr Eggman is as black as a room with no light, also he has a blade-like fire on his forehead. This enemy of Sonic has psychic powers. If one 'Shadow' fails, another 'Shadow comes'...

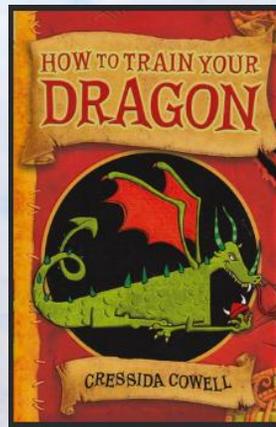
**Amy** - This pink furry hedgehog has a cherry dress and two golden rings. She has a large love hammer as her weapon. When moving, she transforms into a pink blur or an icy blue, freezing weapon. In the daytime she chases her crush, Sonic, and tries to kiss him or smash him with her hammer.

**Cream and Cheese** - Most people don't realise that Cream called her pet Chao, Cheese, because Cream and Cheese match!! Cream is a tiny rabbit with stretchy ears. She has a maroon dress with a sky blue bow. Much like Tails, this rabbit aged six can glide through the air but with her ears.

## Book Recommendation

By Isabel Priest (Moles)

In preparation for lockdown I borrowed a few books from the library. One of these books was 'How to train your dragon' by Cressida Cowell. This book is quite different from the films that you may have watched, although it features mostly the same characters. The main two characters, if you don't know, are Hiccup, the chief's son and Toothless, Hiccup's dragon. Toothless is a very stubborn dragon but he is eventually he listens to Hiccup and they make friends. Hiccup does not seem very heroic but things aren't always as they seem. It's a great book. A real must read. If you can find a way to get it at the moment, anyway! 😊

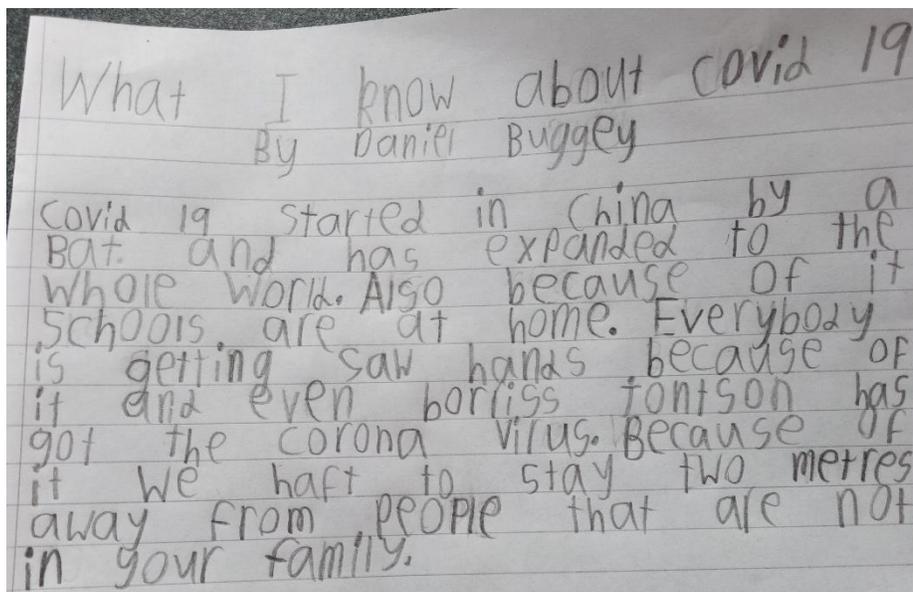


Reading is a great thing to do, all of the time, but especially at the moment. It teaches us new words and that is useful as we don't have school at the moment. Also, it is a fun activity with no time limits and you can read whenever you want to. Personally, I think reading is a great thing to do because it cheers me up, but it's your decision.

Do you want to read? Go on It's fun! 😊

## What I know about Covid-19

By Daniel Bugey (Swallows)



Thank you to everyone for your fantastic contributions – it's wonderful to see what you've been doing at home!